181 and singing, playing and listening to music, eating festively, drinking rice beer, and implicitly sexual activity; in practice, [521] these are the activities characteristic of a Santal festival. When a traditional and typically uneducated Santal meets another from a distant region, one of the first questions asked will be, "How is pleasure in your region?" The reply will focus on the [152] activities mentioned above. Indeed, the only occasion in which I observed a fully sober Santal male adult burst into tears was during such a festive event. When I asked the old man why he was weeping at such a time, he replied, "The sounds of the drum remind me of the pleasure of my youth and of my • [273] deceased wife who shared in my pleasure." It will be recalled [192] that it was rice beer which enabled the propagation of the Santal to proceed in the beginning of things, and if there is one word which is more frequently uttered than any other, more frequent even than the sound of festive drums, it is the cry of "*haṇḍi, haṇḍi haṇḍi*" (rice beer; from *handia*, Hindi = [539] an earthenware container). As the Santal sing:

> Oh "flower friend"•
> I am thirsty and I am hungry;
> But hearing the sound of the drums under the canopy†
> My thirst and hunger are banished.

181 The Santal pleasure complex is of primary importance in 527 considering recent economic and political events, but here the concern is with "pleasure" as a shared understanding serving the solidarity of the Santal. As the Santal think of it, "pleasure"

[192] • A "flower friend" or *phul* (as in Hindi *phul* = flower) is a formally cele-
[512] brated ritual friendship.
[192] † The "canopy" or *chamda* is utilized in wedding ceremonies to cover the
[585] area in which the ceremony takes place.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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181 is pre-eminently a social phenomenon: it obtains essentially
527 during festivals, which are community events; it derives from
[535] a festive atmosphere, which only the assembled community can create; and it reaches its community-centered peak as throngs of men and women form a large dancing circle, men and women alternating so that each one has a member of the opposite sex on each side, hands joined together. While I am sensible of anthropological naïveté, the remarks and demeanor of the Santal on such occasions leave little doubt that such performances are a potent source as well as a reflection of community solidarity. During and just after such dancing there is generally great camaraderie, and everyone exchanges cigarettes and rice beer while moving about from one house to another.

527 Although it is above all village solidarity which such festivals
628 enhance and reflect, they also draw together the members of a particular village and Santal from as far as thirty miles away. The Santal are aware of the attraction of the drums and in many regions festivals are celebrated at slightly different times by nearby villages so that one can participate in several, and
181 so that reciprocity becomes possible. "Pleasure," as the Santal
619 understand the term, is a shared understanding which creates
648 immediate bonds with co-tribals wherever they may be from, and, like many other more official boundary-marking symbols of solidarity, also binds the Santal to the neighboring Mundari tribes; it is not uncommon to find some members of several of these tribes participating in any particular Santal festival. To
[273] be sure it is also possible to see drunken men quarreling at a
[578] Santal festival, and other signs of discord, but this will be discussed later.

619 The Santal origin myth validates the kinship ties between all Santal and thereby provides a basis for such unity as the Santal

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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184 variation and specialization do exist even though there are few sharp boundary lines. There is one regular social event
224 which reflects and intensifies regional cultural and social inter-
628 connection; this event is an annual hunt followed by a large all-male gathering outside some village where performances largely humorous and/or "obscene" (in their eyes as well as mine) take place. The participants consist of teams generally from several villages within a vicinity, and they compete with other similarly constituted teams for the favor of the assembled
• [273] throng. Like many such gatherings, it terminates with rice beer.

In most of the territory occupied by the southern Santal, game is so scarce that the hunting aspect of this yearly event has become *pro forma*. After the hunt and its rituals, the various teams proceed in a march-dance parade through different villages as they make their way toward the final gathering place
[534] where performances will be held. Vigorous drum-beating marks
[535] the progress of their procession, and the characteristic Santal male strutting in dance is particularly pronounced. Any game
[192] that has been shot is borne aloft on pole stretchers. The entire event is known as *Sendra*.

[692] Several of my informants as well as the literature maintain that serious discussions of Santal customs and even settling of disputes that have escaped solution within the judicial units occur after the hunt. This was not the case at the one *Sendra* I attended. However this may be, the *Sendra* remains the largest and territorially the widest gathering of Santal, sometimes bringing together more than a thousand Santal living within a radius of about fifty miles.

596 Still to be considered are the intertwined components of the
592 extended and nuclear family. The term "extended family" is unfortunately one which has often been used very loosely; it

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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783 the local lineage, but it is filled with the pollution of some unknown *Diku* caste.

Another obstacle to worship that the city Santal encounter is
273 that it is illegal to brew rice beer in the city. This restriction
369 is also cited by the city Santal as a reason why they do not
769 practice ancestor worship. On several occasions the police have interfered with its manufacture in town *bustees*.

177 Were the city Santal able to live side by side in a single sec-
327 tion of the city and to build their own houses, they might at
369 least attain the solidarity of the *bustee* communities. But the
362 policy of alloting houses follows the universalistic principles which TISCO has deliberately fostered. Houses are assigned according to rank in the factory hierarchy and seniority, with personal preference a minor consideration. Thus, the Santal and other ethnic groups are generally dispersed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that most of those Santal who have chosen to live in Company houses are relatively well educated and highly acculturated; nor is it surprising that the lack of a Santal community in the city is contributing markedly to the Hinduization of the Santal children living there.

121 Migration to industrial employment has acted as a socio-
182 cultural solvent significantly affecting marriage and ceremonial
464 patterns. Weber's notion of its importance is borne out, but in the cases examined it does not appear to be "the mere fact of living in quite different surroundings" which accounts for its significance. Here its effect seems largely due to its tendency to disrupt traditional social bonds. In the absence of such disruption, as in the case of the natives of Daredih, it seems that traditional practices evolved in a context far removed from urban-industrial conditions are surprisingly viable. These findings support Nash's contentions about the importance of mi-

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

881 [776] them all at the same time. If a child should die before having been through this ceremony, they do not cremate such ones and do not carry their bones to the Damuda river.

[273] [302] A man wants to have the caco chaṭiar for his children; he brews beer and procures oil and turmeric to anoint the village people. Then he calls the village headman and his deputy and pours beer out to these two. They ask him: Look here, you, what beer is this that you are giving us? He says: This, father, is intimation-beer; I am minded to do so and so, that is to say, I am going to have caco chaṭiar for my children. This happens in the morning. After having drunk the beer the village headman and his deputy

[793] send the Goḍet to call the village people[7]. They come; when they are assembled, the village girls first anoint the village priest and his wife sitting on a mat; thereupon they anoint the field priest and his wife, after them the village headman and his wife, thereupon his deputy and this one's wife, the custos morum and wife, his deputy and wife, the messenger and wife, and finally they anoint all the (men and) women of the village. Now they serve beer round. First they give the village headman and his deputy, thereupon all the people. When one round has been served they ask the father of the children: For how many is this? He answers: For so and so many. Then so many children as are to have the caco chaṭiar, so many rounds of beer they serve, each round four leaf-cups to each. Then they ask the father of the children: How many iṛi and how many erba of yours have shot into ears[8]? He says: So many iṛi and so many erba have shot into ears. They say in reply: Very fortunate. Then they ask him: Whereabouts are the countries? The children's father then names the countries where the grandparents of the children live. Then they call for the namesake-beer. Now the grandparents of the

[603] children give the village people beer that they have brought with them from their homes.

[539] Thereupon the village people dance singing:

Along here, along in this direction are Nilgai tracks,
Along here, along in this direction are Nilgai hind tracks.

Track, track the Nilgai tracks,
Follow, follow the Nilgai hind tracks.

On the tank embankment are Nilgai tracks,
On the river bank are tracks of the Nilgai hind.

Tie on him (her), O mother, a golden bell,
Fasten on him (her) O mother, hollow sounding bells.

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[192] [7] Nowadays the Jog Mañjhi is generally asked to call the people together; the people sit in rows on straw spread out for the purpose. [8] I. e., how many girls and how many sons have been born to you? iṛi in Paṇkuma Cruz-galli, L., fig. used about a girl; erba in Śeturia Italko, Kunth., fig. used about a boy.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

585 [302] [535]

When they have anointed the bridegroom, they anoint his follower, and last of all they anoint the conductress of ceremonies. When they have again drunk two leaf-cups of beer each, they separate and go home. But from this day until the marriage is finished the young men and girls dance day and night.

[273]

After three days the time for going with the bridegroom comes. The father of the bridegroom then at cock-crow pours out one earthenware pot full of "intimation" beer, and calling the village headman and his deputy, the Jog Mañjhi and his deputy he gives them beer.

While they are drinking, the village headman asks the bridegroom's father: Look here, what beer is this? We do not find the malted grain. "Malted grain" is a metaphorical word, viz., the explanation of the matter, why he has brought them there. The father of the bridegroom then says in reply: Help us to-day to follow the bridegroom, the day fixed has come. The village headman then says to the Jog Mañjhi: Do call the village people together. He sends the Godet, who brings all there. They give beer to all. The bridegroom's father says to the Jog Mañjhi: Please get hold of five men for me. He brings them, and the bridegroom's father says: Do bring food out for us the bridegroom's party, rice, curry, salt, and five pots of beer; when it is light we shall send forerunners in advance; and at the same time they take along one goat and one pot of beer, three half-seers of rice (if the bride-price is five rupees, then five half-seers of rice), three branches of the root of turmeric, tobacco, salt, and oil in a small earthenware vessel, the last mentioned things are obligatory presents, that is to say, they call them materials for offering to the bongas.

When the forerunners have had food, they take all the things mentioned along in advance. When they reach there, one of them goes to the house where the marriage is to be held. Here also they have set up a marriage-shed and have worked as in the bridegroom's village. The man says: How is it, Sir, we the forerunners have come. The bride's father then says to the Jog Mañjhi: Please show them where to stay. The Jog Mañjhi then takes the forerunners to where they have made sheds for the bridegroom's party. He gives them earthenware pots for water and cooking, a flat basket, wooden ladles, firewood, leaf-plates, and leaf-cups; thereupon he returns to the house of marriage.

After they have sent the forerunners off, the people of the bridegroom's village, men and women, go to have "water-marriage". The bridegroom's mother takes a flat basket along. In this there is sun-dried paddy, sun-dried rice, a bunch of dhubi grass, one egg, oil, and sindur and one ball of thread. The wife of the bridegroom's father's younger brother carries a sword, and his paternal aunt carries bow and arrows. Two anointing girls carry on their heads narrow-necked earthenware pots resting on pads of thread, having covered them up with clothes for the bride; these two pots they call omen-pots. A brother-in-law

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[607]

we shall see the waving ceremony. They make themselves ready and take with them one pot of squeezed-out-beer and one small pot of poured-out beer. This they call "Founding-still"[51]. Two men carry this along to the bride's home. When the bridegroom's party arrive there, they spread out straw for them to sit on in the temporary shed. The head-man of the bride's side says to the bridegroom's party: Please sit down here; we shall see the performance of the waving ceremony[52]. They sit down. 585

Now the Jǫg Mąńjhi on the bride's side says: Please find the anointing girls and grind some turmeric; we shall anoint the bride and the bridegroom. The anointing girls anoint the bride and the bridegroom and those with them. Thereupon they give them food. At this time the bridegroom will not eat, and when they ask him, he will not speak. The bride's father then says to him: Do, my son-in-law, eat both of you, I shall give you both milk[53] to eat. And as he promises to give him a calf, he eats. When they have eaten, they get up. The anointing girls roll up the mat, and in the hem-end of their cloths they take the broken bits of turmeric. Now the conductress of ceremonies takes the loṭa with water and goes out into the courtyard; when she has gone out, they see that no figures are drawn at the Mahua post. The Jǫg Mąńjhi then says to her: Please smear cow-dung there and draw figures with flour. She answers him: Give me something, then only I shall draw. The Jǫg Mąńjhi says to the bridegroom's party: Please, honoured bridegroom's party, no drawing is being made here, as you see. They answer him: How is it that no drawing is being made; do exert yourself to make her draw. He answers them: I am exerting myself; it is not proper. They then say: Make her willing, we shall give (what is needed).

Thereupon the conductress of ceremonies plasters with cow-dung and draws figures, so that it may look nice. The Jǫg Mąńjhi says to her: Now please, take the loṭa with water and lead the bride and the bridegroom three times round where drawings have been made. She does this; then the Jǫg Mąńjhi says to the girls who are keeping the mats: Do spread the mat out on this drawing. They do this, and the Jǫg Mąńjhi says to the bride and the bridegroom, the best-man, the two followers and the conductress: Please sit down on the mat. They sit down, and the Jǫg Mąńjhi goes into the house and says to the bride's mother: Take out the lucky-pot[54]. The bride's mother and her followers, i. e., the wives of three brothers, take out the lucky-pot; and they also take with them one seer of paddy in a fold of their cloth; in front of the bride and the bridegroom they take the paddy out from the cloth-fold and put it down there, and thereupon they put the pot down on the top of the paddy. They put an earthenware lid on the mouth of the narrow-necked pot. After this they [532]

[51] The translation is only an attempt. The word rendered as "still" (bhąṭi, a Hindi word) is the name of the oven or kiln used by Suṇḍis when brewing beer or distilling liquor, and is by Santals mostly used fig. about liquor. [192]
[52] Different from the previously mentioned ceremony, in as much as the waving is ended by giving a present; cf. Dictionary s. v. cumąura. [53] Fig. about the gift of a calf (heifer). [54] Kolean here uses the word that is the common one in Manbhum (karwās ṭhili) and rare in the Santal Parganas, where sągun ṭhili, omen pot, is mostly heard. [273]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

hunt. The rice-planting songs they sing when planting rice in the rice-fields, without dancing; the folk-tale songs they sing sitting down during the hot season in the evening; and the forest songs young men and girls sing in the forest, and also during the Sohrae, metaphorically. Dirges they sing at the final funeral ceremonies; these they also call "crying songs".

Except in the sword dance, the lạnṛiạ, and ḍahar (road) dances girls and young men dance together in all dances. When dancing the girls take hold of each other's hands, and the young men dance in front of and opposite to the girls, without taking hold of each other. Some young men will dance themselves alone while drumming the kettle-drum; some young men will, while drumming the dancing-drum, dance together with those who drum the kettle-drum; some young men blow the flute and dance at the same time, and some young men only dance, and they sing together with the girls. Young men and girls enjoy dancing very much; they dance the whole night, and during day-time they work; still because of their joy they do not feel tired. The old men and women do not warn the young people not to dance, rather they go to look at them, and when they feel drowsy and go home, they say to the young people, as they leave: Do stop now, otherwise you will be drowsy when you have to work to-morrow. The young people answer them: Well, we are stopping presently. Still they continue dancing, until they are done for. While they are dancing the Jọg Mạñjhi does not stay there either, the young people are there alone right up to the end. Having danced until cock-crow they lie down just a little.

Elderly men and women do not dance the lagṛẹ̄ much, only now and then for a short while; but during the Chạṭiạr, the Flower and the Karam festivals they dance. Any one who knows the jhikạ, starts this, and they dance slowly and sing.

b. Beer drinking.

The real joy of old men is in the beer. When they have drunk themselves jolly tipsy, they start a thousand things, about the old country, about landlords and usurers, about dancing, singing and whatever it may be; then they laugh, they are rejoicing, they feel exceedingly well. If they become drunk, they lie down and sleep, and there is an end of their joy. Elderly women also drink a good deal. Formerly elderly women did not drink much, and young men and girls not at all. Nowadays all Santals drink very much, a great shame. Formerly no one drank from a brass-cup; they used leaf-cups; nowadays they pour brass-cup after brass-cup down; still they are not satisfied. Formerly they did not drink Suṇḍi[2] beer, only now and then they would drink liquor. Nowadays many Santals are becoming paupers by drinking Suṇḍi beer. If they have no money they take paddy

[2] Low-caste Hindus, who brew beer, distill liquor, and sell it.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

178 or rice along with them, so that there is no food at home; in spite of this when they come home and no food has been prepared for them, they scold their wives a good deal and even beat them. The poor wife, where is she to get anything with which to prepare food? [426] If they have no paddy or rice, they will drink, making debts. Then in the month of Magh (middle of January to middle of February) the Sup̣i comes, harasses and threatens them, and carts their paddy bundles away. The wife and children of such a man pass their time in much suffering, as regards food and clothes. From the forest they bring vegetables and different kinds of tubers, cook and eat these. Formerly they were drinking four, or six, or if it became very much, eight leaf-cups; in this way their strength was not diminished; they were very strong and vigorous like youths. Nowadays, by constantly drinking and by marrying before they are fullgrown, they are becoming puny and stunted in growth; by behaving in such a way, — how should they retain their strength?

c. Stories and folk-tales.

538 By fairy-stories, folk-tales, and conundrums the Santals feel much enjoyment. In the evening the old men teach them this. The sons and daughters-in-law are occupied in the evening cooking rice and curry, making leaf-cups and leaf-plates, and the old people, husband and wife, tell the children fairy-stories and folk-tales and ask them riddles, to make them happy. If anyone knows a number of fairy-stories and folk-tales, the young people of the village will also gather at his place. And at the threshing-floors, when it is cold and they lie in the huts there, the young men learn much of this. Some people know so many; they tell the others folk-tales the whole night until dawn, still they are not finished, and those who listen do not get tired either; at such times they have no thought at all of dancing; listening they are utterly charmed by joy[3].

Girls and boys mostly learn riddles, and all day long they ask each other such. The young men learn more fairy-stories and folk-tales; even if girls learn the same, they will only get enough courage to let this be known in the presence of people when they have reached the age of old women. The folk-tales are especially about jackals; the fairy-stories are about kings and landlords and about different kinds of people, and the riddles are about a thousand different matters. When they start a riddle, they say: "A riddle, kite, kite", thereupon they give out the riddle[4].

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113 [114] [3] The Santals have a very large number of folk-tales and stories. The present writer has collected several hundreds. Ten such tales have been published in the Publications of the Indian Institute of the Royal Frederik University, Kristiania 1924, and 93 other tales by Institutet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning (Santal Folk Tales, vol. I to III, Oslo 1929, 1927, and 1929). A few have also been published in a similar way by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. The manuscripts of several hundreds, all written down for me by Santal men and women, is now in the University Library, Oslo. [4] See P. O. Bodding, Santal Riddles. Whiteoraft among the Santals. Oslo Etnografiske Museums Skrifter, vol. 5, hæ. 5. Oslo 1948.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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calling "Thàkur Jiu' as "Dhòròm". Nabin Mañjhi, Headman of Chamardahani, Muruda, explained that Dhòròm is the Creator of the world according to Santal belief. Being asked if the deity is worshipped at present by the Santals, he replied that Dhòròm is invoked during all marriage ceremonies with offerings of pure water and nothing else. Closely questioned as to whether the god had any shape or form, he answered that he had none and was 'nirakar' (*formless*). Secondly, the Santals of Muruda led by Nabin Mañjhi gave us some additional information as to how the first parents prepared the first drink. This was what they did. Gòròm baba asked them to grind grass-seeds and later directed them to bring the water from a fountain called *tatijhari*, by drinking which the monkeys became drunk as it washed the roots of a plant named *ràmu ran*.[1] [A plant of the name exists in Mayurbhanj and is extensively used in the preparation of hàṇdia (*rice-beer*)]. Then these two substances were mixed together to make the drink of the first parents. Thirdly, we have seen in the foregoing account that the Santals, while at Hihiri Pipiri were divided into seven clans and it is only after their migration from Sasañ beda that they

1. Ràmu—The ferment used in the manufacture of rice-beer, Ran—drug (Dr. Campbell).

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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boiled in water and mixed with salt and turmeric, serve as sauces in the Santal dinner.

We have already got some idea about the Santal use of "mohua" oil in cooking. This oil, they massage also over their bodies, but after and not before their daily ablution, as is the custom with some Hindus. Like the rest of the world, they delight in a smoke of tobacco. We have already noticed the preparation of the "pungi", the Santal cigarette, called also *chuti* in the Santal Parganas. This is, we were told, men's monopoly, the women smoking only occasionally. But raw tobacco, mixed with lime in the form of "khaini" (*Hindi*) is chewed frequently by both men and women as a perpetual stimulant.

No review of the material background of Santal life will be complete without a reference to their domestic animals. Cows, buffaloes, sheep and goats meet your eyes in the cattle-yard; pigs grunt, geese cackle and fowls flutter about mixed up with pigeons flying down from their improvised nests inside earthen pitchers suspended from roofs.

Drink

"Give me rice-beer, or give me death," may be the summary of a Santal's instinctive craving for

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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273 drinks, and we remember how even Gandhiji in his prohibition campaign has excluded the aboriginal from his programme. "Hàṇḍia" (rice-beer) is a compulsory offering to some of their gods and spirits and on social rounds it is customary with the Santal to present pots of beer. The *modus operandi* of the preparation was thus explained to us by a comely Santal woman selling beer under a banyan tree. She said that sun-dried rice is first ground and mixed with a powdered root, called "ràṇu" in Santali (Oriya, *mulika*). The whole mass is then shaped into little balls. Next, rice is boiled and spread out to dry and the balls are then powdered and mixed thoroughly with the rice. The next stage requires the mixture thus obtained to be kept in large earthen pots, (See illustration) covered with "sal"-leaves for three or four days together, in course of which the rice is well fermented. The pots beside the woman contained this mixture and she, with a great deal of gusto, showed us how the fluid of the rice-beer trickled down a bamboo sieve (Santali, "chala"), being pressed by the hand with a handful of fibres (Santali, "pala") to complete the process. She, a

[782]
[594]

Fermented rice

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3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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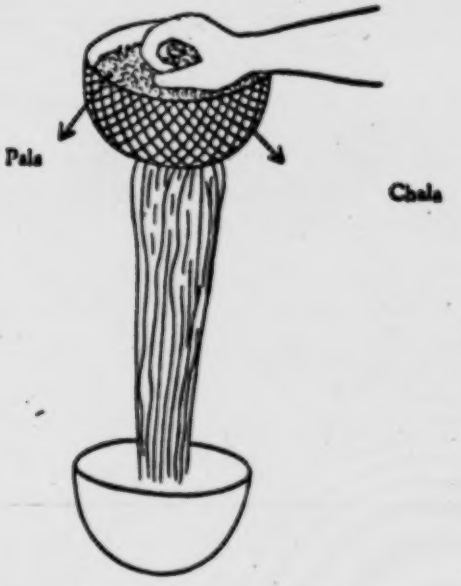
solitary vendor, without thirsty customers at the moment, demonstrated with a smile how to drink it from "sal" leaf-cups. (See illustration).

273 415



Handia being pressed down in the beer-cup

Leaf-cup

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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The Economic Background of Santal life

"Where shall I get the rice to brew beer?" pleaded a Santal accused in an excise case answering a charge of distilling spirits. It was pointed out that no excise rules prevented him from fermenting "hàṇḍia," the home-made beer. "Where shall I get the rice?" the puzzling defence was hurled at the magistrate, sitting at the courts of Dumka, S. P.

Some time after, news trickled from Jamtara areas that some infuriated Santals ran after those who went to help them during a conflagration in their villages with bows and arrows, seeking to shoot them down. "We have nothing to eat, let fire take our houses too," was what they exclaimed, not that they could not understand the humanitarian services of the village fire-brigade.

Those were years of some scarcity no doubt, but the pictures afford us a glimpse of Santal economic life. They seem to have no power of resistance against a rainy day and think more of drinks to drown their sorrow, even if they have to infringe excise laws. In the Santal economic background poverty seems to loom large. No wonder that one of their folk-songs during the December Harvest Home has these telling lines:—

Dè ho durup'pè,[1]
Dè ho tèṅgònpè,

1 The full song has been incorporated in the chapter on Folk-poetry.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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mahajans and many of us run to the tea-gardens to earn a living.'"[1]

Statistics sheds further light on the condition of the cattle, the mainstay of an agricultural population. "A large section of the aborigines consisting of the Santals, and the Bhumijs, and forming about 50 per cent of the population, do not care for milk as an item of nutrition. This perhaps contributes to a certain extent to their indifference to the improvement of cattle. Even as beasts of burden or as instruments of husbandry, the cattle in the state are very poor in quality."[2] So depending on such ricketty props, they can only turn out paddy and thereafter "biri" (*mug* pulse), in pathetic ignorance of supplementary means of livelihood like cottage-industries.

Little wonder that with such limited means of livelihood and scanty fare as we have already noticed they offer little resistance to intoxication. Their wants and worries weigh upon them so much that they take to drunken forgetfulness to drown their

1 Ref. *Census Report of Mayurbhanj*, 1931, p. 10, which reads "During the last decade 1,497 coolies belonging to this State were recruited for work in the tea-gardens by the garden-sirdars."

2 There are in all 600,000 heads of cattle in the State (Total population 8089,603) page 71 *Census Report* of Mayurbhanj, 1931.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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735 sorrows. It is a pathetic sight to see young Santals
293 keep sober till they marry, and then grow old sud-
154 denly as cares and anxieties of life come to them, when they plunge headlong in a sodden life.

181 The rigours of their life on the earth are somewhat overcome by the objects of material culture we have noted in the foregoing pages. But one can easily see that they are crude devices of a primitive world, not serving their purpose well in the [171] twentieth century. But, one must however notice that the level of culture presented by the Santal is on a par with that of the rest of the hill tribes of what may be called the Central Belt of India, which is a homogeneous culture-area in all important respects.

Conclusion

174 As we conclude the review of Santal economic
181 life, we find that the actual stage reached by the
224 tribe in its material culture is still primitive. Their
241 traditions make it clear that there was a time in the
433 life of the Santals when they lived a semi-hunting nomadic life, perpetually moving in quest of food. But the picture we have got in the foregoing pages reveals a people who have finally accepted the life of settled agriculturists.

177 As, however, we look closely to the objects of Santal material culture, we notice similarities with

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in his house. Ploughing, however, is an exclusive privilege of men; and women are debarred from it as a social taboo. The penalty for breach of this custom consists in a fine and ceremonial purification by the tribe. If you question a Santal on the genesis of the institution, he will tell you the myth that in ancient times when a woman first took the plough, the cattle in the yoke went on straight ahead and she could not make them deviate either to the left or to the right according to her will, when lo and behold, out opened a mighty river from under the furrows to the consternation of everybody.

In conjugal life, the women like their other Indian sisters are self-sacrificing. She will, we have already seen, eat last of all after feeding other members of the family. We asked a woman point-blank, "Why don't you dine along with men? Have you no such right?" "Our rights are equal," she answered with a genial smile, "but we choose not to exercise it." The way, however, she exercises her equal rights impresses one so much that the old Sirdar of Muruda, Mayurbhanj, was definitely of opinion that the Santal women work more than their male partners.

The equality of status, the woman claimed for her, extends to the drinking cup as well; but a distinction was drawn by her paradoxically enough when she blurted out, "We drink like men but do

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562 not get drunk." Only if we had not seen women
• 293 babbling in drunken brawl with the introduction of the outstill system in the Santal Parganas, and had not educated Santals at Baripada told us an opposite tale, . . we could thoroughly agree with her sex-patriotism, if such a phrase is permissible.

562 In house-construction, however, the division of
342 labour has a nicety of its own, for, we learn, the
784 women cannot sit upon a thatch except on pain of
[783] social excommunication. Such a pollution can only
[462] be expatiated by *Pujas* to the god "Dhòròm." So by its very necessity, house-building is man's
562 preserve. A quite similar taboo attaches to them
784 during funerals when according to custom, women
764 cannot accompany the procession beyond the limits of the village where the death occurred.

464 Santal men engaged in the police service were
625 highly spoken of by the Superintendent of Police,
159 Mayurbhanj, as efficient, obedient and hard-working. Asked if their drink-habit was not a hindrance to them, he was emphatic that it did not matter at all. Mr. Mahanty, a Deputy Magistrate, spoke in a similar strain about his Santal employees.

562 And we have seen women at work, at work
461 during the heat-wave of the Santal Parganas when all nature flies indoors, women singing at their work, punctual to a fault and hard-working to a painful extent. But, if her hour of work is seven a.m.

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of the audience. The feet of the successful cow are then ceremonially washed.[1]

The second day is devoted to the preparation of food for the different tribal gods, in whose honour animals like fowls, goats and pigs are sacrificed. Ancestor-spirits are also worshipped and their memory honoured and offerings and libations made to them at home by heads of families. The evening is spent in community feasts on a large scale with drinks of rice-beer offered to the gods and thereafter drunk by the members of the tribe.

The climax of the ceremonials reaches with the worship of cows (*Gohal Puja*). When all are sleeping, young men of the tribe keep vigil and go from place to place to awaken the cows, beginning with the Headman's house, playing on pipes and kettle-drums.

The following is a song sung on the occasion:—

Gàini còlilo siribinda bònè ho,
Màhisini carae gaṅga para jo yo re,
Màhisini carae gaṅga para jo.

---

1 E. G. Man, in his *Sonthalia and the Sonthals* (p. 57) in this connection refers to the Egyptian myth of the "Bull and the Egg." The ceremony consists in newly laid hen's eggs being placed on the village lane and oxen driven past, and the one who stoops to smell the egg is held in high estimation for the year. "I believe," says Man, "the Egyptian mythology states that the earth came out of an egg which the bull broke."

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796 dances round the *Karam* branch. The conclusion
796 of the dance sees a tug-of-war between the youths
526 and maidens of the tribe, for the latter won't allow the branch to be taken away for immersion by the former; and this trial of strength can only be avoided if the lopped branch can be stolen away from the vigilant eyes of the other sex. This tug-of-war is a pure amusement. There is no hidden meaning behind the custom.

796 At midnight, the villagers take a nocturnal
231 round near cow-sheds singing songs with musical accompaniments, with the object of kissing the cattle and thus adoring them.

The third day is devoted to sports with the cattle. Early in the morning the members of the tribe assemble at the house of the Headman with their drums and other musical instruments and make *biras* (a stack of paddy coiled together in a circle) according to the number of cattle in the Headman's cattle-shed and tack them to their horns. They get a bit frightened and are let loose amidst the din of drums, and as they rush out, men shower on them rice-beer and women stone them with eggs. As the cattle run on pell-mell, the last one is caught by an enterprising Santal, and its feet are washed with a good deal of ceremony.

796 Next, a punch is made of the Headman's rice-
• 273 beer with those of the other cattle-owners, and drunk
769 after offering it to the ancestor-spirits.

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796 the Hindu festival prevalent on the day. This
[769] is also called *Sakrant puja* and performed on an elaborate scale at Mayurbhanj, when *chira* (flattened rice) and molasses are offered to the dead ancestors.

796 On the first day, called "Banuṇḍi," people catch
262 fish and crab in the belief if they can eat them on the day, they will be given a long lease of life. Tasteful cakes of meat, sun-dried rice-flour are prepared in all households ; and after baths, the Santals eat them with treacle and *til* (sesamum),
[273] *chira* (flattened rice) being a compulsory item. Meanwhile, drinks of rice-beer go on.

796 Towards evening, the people indulge in archery
[526] competition on a target placed on a plantain tree. The successful one is cheered by the tribe and conveyed to the Headman's residence with a great demonstration, where the tribe is entertained with rice-beer and fried-rice. He, who can maintain a uniform record for three consecutive years, is awarded a special prize by the Headman, amidst tribal songs and dances.

The conclusion of the festival sees a great deal
[532] of mirth in all the houses. Puppet monkeys made
[574] of straw are made to dance from house to house. People raise subscriptions for a tribal dinner and the country-side rings with merry music and laughter of a good time.

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[754] their baleful influence. Similarly, some men are [822] supposed to possess "evil shadows," so much so, that even if snakes fall within their ambit, they cannot move an inch. When a child vomits, has [753] bowel complaints or fever, or cries unnecessarily, it is the evil eye that is thought to be responsible for [822] the malady. Let a man's evil shadow fall on rice-[213] beer, lo and behold! it does no more ferment.

[789] To prevent these, Santal children are made to [754] wear amulets of parasites on *Bhela* trees. Incantations are also uttered over some mustard seeds, a few grains of which are wrapped up in a piece of cloth and worn as a charm held by a string round the loins or the neck. In serious cases, the *Ojha* [756] (exorcist) is summoned when he chants incantations and removes the spell.

Magical charms to counteract spells are learnt by many Santals, for, who knows that 'evil eyes' may not lead them to embarrassing situations at village dances, when they may find their wearing cloth being stolen away by invisible hands? And [756] in ceremonies like marriages, the services of an exorcist are sometimes requisitioned to patrol over women with evil eyes or men with evil shadows.

Apart from these, there are various other beliefs regarding the capacity of certain men to cast magical [578] spells. Thus if an inimical person buries anything near a Santal's house, it is thought that an injury is intended.

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The old Santal would not grow potato due to their conservative instincts even when Pontet asked them, now they grow it along with tomato. The women now wear mill-made saris and in the urban areas of Santal Parganas, they seem indistinguishable from their Hindu sisters, because in fairs and rallies, they generally dress alike. Some widows, it has been seen at Bolpur, dress themselves in white. It is interesting to hear that in some areas, there is lesser divorce. And due to the impact of new ideas women's right in inheritance is being slowly recognised by the state and the society through indirect legal fictions.

With ideas of reform in the atmosphere, some acting as disintegrating forces, others operating on a constructive basis, it was no surprise to us to come across a manifesto signed by some prominent educated Santals of Bengal and some parts of Bihar calling upon their brethren of Midnapore, Bankura, Manbhum, Singbhum and other areas to engage in social reforms for the maintenance of their tribal honour. It stated that the Santals had firmly resolved that:

1. No Santal, man or woman, should drink *Pochoi* (rice-beer) in shops as the tribe had been ruined by drink while the grog-shop owners and *mahajans* were becoming rich. Temperance would help the Santals financially.

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Bhakar are properly mixed, it is all put into the brewing pot generally in the evening. The contents in the pot are covered with a leaf plate to press the rice. And over it is put an earthen-ware lid. The brewing pot is then put aside in a place where people do not go often. The rice takes seven or eight days to ferment in winter whereas in summer four or five days. Cold water may be added until the pot is full. The beer looks milky and a little brownish in colour. It has a peculiar acid sweet smell, any one who has drunk a little may be detected by the smell from a considerable distance. [273]

Before drinking the beer libations are made to Maran Buru the principal godling, and to the ancestors one after the other. It is done by pouring a little beer on to the floor inside the house. When the first brew is finished, fresh hot water is again poured on the rice, and this is called doja handi (second brew beer), it is not so strong as the first one. [782]

To prepare wine from Mowar[1] fruit, they place two earthen pots one above the other, the base of the second one is perforated and above it another earthen pot is placed in which water is poured. Below the surface of the second pot a bamboo pipe is fixed. In the first pot mowa fruits and water are put and left for four or five days. Then they boil the ingredients, when the steam rises into the second pot, and coming in contact with third pot, it becomes liquid and through the bamboo pipe it trickles out, and falls in a pot which is kept for this purpose. This liquid is the wine which they drink. But now-a-days the government does not permit them to distil liquor any more. The Santal traditions suggest that their first parents were taught to [773]

1 [Erratum: this should read "Mowa." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

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258 through the vertical post at the other end. Then they press together the two logs by placing another solid piece of wood crosswise over the upper log parallel to the wooden cleat which is fitted in the vertical post. With the help of these two, the logs are pressed together. Now-a-days the Santals supply the seeds and fruits to the Teli (oil men) and get oil in return. Besides using this oil for curry preparation they use oil in anointing, lubricating, for medicinal purposes and for lighting lamps.

[178] [252] [302] [757] [372]

How the Santals Prepare Pachaus (rice beer) :- The Santals drink Handi in large quantities. Young boys and girls, old men and women all drink Handi. Their method of preparing (rice beer) handi is as follows :- The first thing is to make a pot, with a large mouth called *tukuc*. The *tukuc* is filled with dry leaves or straw and set on the fire, they do it outside the house in the open as there is much smoke. This is done in the morning when they are to start brewing. When the *tukuc* becomes cool, it is cleaned. Then in the afternoon, they take ordinary rice and roast this a little. The roasting is said to give a certain flavour to the beer. Thereupon the rice is boiled and after that spread out to dry. The quantity of rice used for one brew varies from four to six paos (one pao is quarter of a seer). When the rice is fairly dry it is mixed with some vegetable fermenting stuff called Bakhar.[1] Very often certain vegetable matter is added to the Bakhar to make the beer intoxicating. When the rice and

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[804]

1. Bakhar is a small round white thing which the Santals buy in the market. It is prepared by mixing hundred kinds of roots of trees and creepers with the powder of rice.

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273 brew beer by Maran Buru who came to them and told them he was their grand father.

276 **Smoking :-** The Santals are inveterate smokers. The indigenous method of smoking is to take some pieces of dried tobacco leaves, wrap them in a sal leaf, and smoke it like a cheroot. But now a days machine [178] made cigarettes have made their appearance. The manner in which tobacco is most commonly used, is by chewing dried tobacco with lime. Hookas (hubble bubble) have also been introduced among them.

231 **Domesticated Animals :-** Dog is the most important animal to the Santals. Every Santal keeps at least one dog. The chief object of keeping this animal is for hunting though no special breed of dog is kept. They keep cows for milk and oxen to draw ploughs. They sometimes eat their flesh. Buffaloes they keep for above mentioned purposes. Goats and sheep are kept for trade and for food. Pigs are kept by the Santals in large quantity exclusively for food, and these animals do most of the scavenging. They feed them and also let them off to wallow here and there. In the evening they keep these animals in a small room specially prepared for them within the room where they keep cows and buffaloes, a small door is kept which the owner opens every morning before dawn to let the pigs out. Cats are kept by the Santals exclusively to catch rats. Fowls and pigeons increase and multiply apparently without any care being taken of them. They are also scavengers of the village. The Santals keep them to eat and to sacrifice them to their Bongas.

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with which the leaves of Nim tree (Melia azadirachta, L) have been mixed. After this they all take a draught of their home-brewed liquor and depart.

On the fifth day the child is given its name. Should it happen to be a son and heir he takes the name of his grandfather; should he be the second son born, he takes the name of his maternal grandfather: and thus the paternal grandfather's brother for the third boy, the maternal grandfather's brother for the fourth boy and so on. The same procedure is followed for girls, the feminine relations being in the same order from the female side.

Chacho Chhatiar: It is a very important ceremony of the Santals, which enables the individual to take his place in Santal society and participate in its rights, rules and ceremonies. Without this no Santal can be married or cremated; if anybody dies without this ceremony he is buried. There is no age limit for this ceremony though it must precede marriage. Generally the Santal performs this ceremony for several children at the same time.

Mr. O'Malley has given a full description of this ceremony in the District Gazetteer[1] in the following words. "The father brews handi and provides oil and turmeric for the villagers. When the handi is ready he calls the manjhi and paranik in the morning and gives them a drink. They ask him what handi it is, and, after drinking, the headman bids the godet call the villagers together. When they have come the girls of the village anoint the naeke and his wife, who sit

[1] L.S.S.O'Malley—Bengal District Gazetteer (Santal Parganas) pp. 132-133.

597 of the boy renounce him and declare him henceforth to belong to the new father; it is also declared that the boy shall have no right of inheritance in the property of his natural father. When all this has been done the adopting father fixes a date for the formal adoption of the boy. The villagers of that village on that day behave as at Janam Chhatiar (name-giving ceremony of the Santal child). They shave and drink handi (rice beer). The usual procedure in a Janam Chhatiar is that the officiating midwife tells the assembled people the name of the new-born child; here she does not tell the name of the boy but the sept or sub-sept of the adopting father; henceforth that becomes the sept of the boy. Thereupon they leave the boy to eat the flesh of animals sacrificed to the tribal deities. Henceforward the boy becomes their own.

684
627 **Bitlaha**: It means to outcast a Santal from society. This outcasting takes place by the order of the assembled members of the Panchayat. It is resorted to when a Santal woman indulges in sexual intercourse with either a diku (non-Santal) or with a person of the same sept. If any one commits such an offence the headman of the village in question calls his neighbouring colleagues together and informs them of the matter; if the people hold that the case is not proven, then those who started the rumour are severely punished. If it is proved, the assembly gives an order for outcasting and they proceed to carry it out the day after the annual hunt. The date of this Bitlaha is announced by a man in the market who carries a branch of a Sal tree (Shorea robusta) with leaves. The people in the market on seeing him understand the matter and count the leaves

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and it is conducted according to the provision of the Indian Christian Marriage Act.

Material Culture. Material culture of the Santals of the Santal parganas has not much changed. They now wear cotton dhuties, shirts and gangees and the women have accepted cotton saris which are used by the Hindus. The well-to-do Christian Santals wear European dress, *i.e.* coats, pants, shirts, socks and shoes. The christian women wear Saris, blouses and petti coat according to the Hindu style.

Some of the younger men and women of the Christian community go out for employment in the towns and cities and when they come back they display their superior material culture, such as fountain pen, wristwatches and other luxury goods.

Rice beer is their important drink but the Christian missionaries make propaganda in favour of total abstinence, and the Christian Santals are gradually giving up this habit and tea is being substituted for it. Machine made cigarettes are slowly coming into use.

In the preparation of rice it seems they have copied something from the Bengali Hindus. The Santals like the Bengalis use boiled rice for their food and unboiled rice for offering to their tribal deities.

The indigenous husking machine of the Santals is mortar and pestle, but they also use husking lever (dhenki) in husking rice which they have copied from their Hindu neighbours.

The Santals, when they speak among themselves, use their own language. But with the 'Dikhus' in the Santal Parganas they speak in broken Hindi and

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They owe their present position of affluence to Santal habits of insobriety. Secondly, much of the land has been acquired by trading castes from Bihar who followed the Santals when the country was being opened up. They brought with them such things as salt and cooking oil, which they exchanged for grain. Clothing was added at a later date, for until within living memory Santals largely wove their own clothes from cotton grown on the lands surrounding their homesteads. Like the Sundis, these traders provided credit facilities for their customers and so gained power over them. The monsoon fails on the average once in seven years in Western Bengal, and the traders import grain in times of scarcity. Formerly this was lent out at a recognized rate of interest amounting to 100 per cent. per annum. The only security which a Santal had to offer was a mortgage on his land, and, if the trader wished it, the almost inevitable result was an action in the courts, followed by an auction at which the creditor purchased the land. The third important class among the landlords are the Brahmins, descendants of the men who were brought into the country to act as priests and court officials to the local *rajas* or rulers. At the time when British rule was being established many of these *rajas* exercised control over tracts of country that were largely covered by forest and sparsely inhabited. They encouraged Santals and some other peoples to settle as cultivators, and they also rewarded the services of their Brahmin officials by grants of land. Brahmins are forbidden by caste rules to engage in cultivation, so they in their turn encouraged Santals to become their tenants.

The Santals have a proverb: "A *Deko* friend is like a thorn fence." In other words, if you stumble into it you are liable to suffer from scratches. They sometimes make fun of themselves and exaggerate the fear that they feel. Thus: "The elders used to run away and hide in the jungle whenever they saw an umbrella approaching the village." But in spite of the fun, the fear persists. A difficulty arose a few years ago in a village Santal church when the superintending missionary placed there as pastor a man who was a *Deko*. This resulted in a vigorous protest, and the leader of the villagers' delegation summed up their feelings in the following parable: "When a kite is wheeling overhead the chickens all take shelter under their mother's wings. After they have grown up they know that the kite can do them no harm, but nevertheless whenever a kite is overhead they quake inwardly and cannot get on with their pecking." In the company of non-Santals, a Santal is inclined to become tongue-

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439 [437] women had no notion of the market price of their resin and were quite content to be paid in this way. The same man had been dealing with that village for many years, and he must have made tremendous profits. Furthermore, on this particular occasion my companion, who was himself a sharp-witted *Deko*, soon realized that the scales were heavily tipped in the trader's favour. On this being pointed out, the latter decamped before his customers were aware of the reason for his haste. One finds 427 also that it is, or has been until very recently, customary for the cultivator in Bengal to pay sums of money in excess of the legal rent to his landlord. The Santal is one of the worst sufferers from this practice, and he continues to pay more than he should for the sake of peace, even when he has been made aware of the fact.

648 668 Santals have not been caught up into the political activities of the last thirty years, for the Congress or nationalist movement is represented locally by those whom they regard as their worst enemies. They have shared some of the excitement engendered during periods of Mass Civil Disobedience, though their own contribution is liable to express itself in unorthodox forms. During the first such movement, in 1920–21, word spread that Gandhi rule had begun and it was Gandhi's order to [231] boycott everything white-coloured. In some places Santals slaughtered large numbers of their poultry in consequence, and in one or two instances even goats and sheep were slain. Their political education has advanced since, and the disillusion which followed their "sacrifice" ensured that there would be no repetition of such tactics. The next great Disobedience movement, in 1930, made more impression largely because on that occasion the Congress programme stressed the boycott of the licensed liquor shops. The Santals welcomed this aspect of the programme, not from any zeal for temperance, but because they soon came to see from experience that the government staff available for enforcing the excise laws was hopelessly inadequate to its task. The practice of illicit distilling, which [213] had previously been held in check by respect for the law, became widespread. Later the extension of the franchise under the Government of India Act of 1935 has shown them that their vote has power. Some of the more politically conscious, infected by the communal situation and influenced by the demand for a separate aboriginal province in Bihar, consider it a grievance that Santals are counted among the "Scheduled castes" on the electoral roll, and think they should be granted separate representation.

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for their timber. The *sarjom*, which predominates, is a valuable tree, but locally it has not been permitted to grow to any height. The trees are cut once in seven years and the timber is exported chiefly to supply firewood in the towns, while the leaf is used for the leaf plates required in city homes and food shops. This activity provides the main subsidiary occupation and is in full swing whenever work in the fields slackens, though it is not sufficient to keep the Santals at home throughout the year. Women share in the occupation; they help the men by stacking the timber as it is cut into lengths, and they collect the leaves which older women sew together while sitting at home. Other women, in the time they can spare from duties at home, collect the twigs and dry branches which they need for domestic fuel. Boys from about the age of seven are engaged in their occupation of tending the village herd of goats and cattle, for which they receive wages from the owners of one anna per month for each goat and two annas per month for each head of cattle in their charge. They are sometimes joined by the younger girls, but after the girls are nine or ten they stay with their mothers, look after the house or help to nurse the younger children.

Women play little or no part in the organization of social or religious life, but they are supreme in household affairs. Although men lay claim to superior intelligence and women openly disclaim any knowledge or interest in affairs outside the home circle, the attitude of the two groups towards each other is one of good-natured tolerance. In Barikul, at the close of a festival when there had been much drinking, the men were feeling unwell. Babulal reports: "Some of the men are saying: 'Yesterday I had nothing to eat, so give me something today.' To which the women reply: 'We have eaten all the food; you men are drunk!' And so they drank more beer and spirits, and became even more drunken than they had been the day before." In his diary entry for the next day he records: "Today all the drunks have begun to beg for some stale rice gruel. The women scolded them: 'You have earned a lot of food, haven't you? Why should you not go out to beg?' " After this chaffing the women relented and gave the men some food before they set out once more to their work. The Santal wife attends fairs and markets; she buys her own clothes and attends to the household shopping. The contrast between them and their non-Santal neighbours is heightened by the fact that they do not cover their heads. One end of the *sari* is thrown loosely across the breasts and over the left shoulder.

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preparing the cakes which the men take with them at the time of the hunt. The flowers have a high sugar content, and their most common use is in the distillation of spirits, the *paura* or brandy of the Santals. The work of distilling is carried on by one or two families in the village, and they sell not only to their fellow villagers, but they operate illegal liquor shops on market days. *Matkom* beer, a drink which is only slightly fermented, as it is prepared within twenty-four hours, is refreshing, but it is used chiefly for the purpose of counteracting the after-effects of a drinking bout.

The women prepare the rice beer which is brewed in all the homes. First they collect the roots that are used as fermenting agents from the forest. In this, as in most of their gathering activities, the women of the village work together. There is a certain ceremonial attached to the gathering of these roots. Parties sometimes consist of women from more than one village, and so a day for the expedition has to be fixed. The procedure suggests that this is regarded as the women's counterpart to the hunt. Before the wood is entered one of the older women invokes *Gōsāi* ("Lord", a general term used in addressing the spirits) and requests that they be led quickly to the places where they will find the desired plants. The first woman to light upon one falls on the ground, pretending to be drunk. These roots are known by the general name of *rapu ran*, "medicine of medicines". It takes three days for the beer to mature or "cook". It cannot be stored, so it is brewed fresh for festival occasions and also in the majority of houses as often as the family can afford. *Handi*, or rice beer, occupies an important place in the ritual as well as in the social life of the tribe. It is essential for all libations to the spirits. A myth relates how the secret of brewing beer was imparted to the first human beings by the chief spirit of the Santals himself. It is therefore the indispensable Santal drink. It is extremely difficult for a Santal to understand not only how a person can live without beer, but why he should try to do so. The case of Pitam, who lived near Benachapra, illustrates this. He was a man of great influence because of his powers as a witch-finder. He had, however, abandoned some of his tribal ways, and, influenced by Vaishnava Hinduism, he had given up meat eating and the drinking of intoxicants. During the annual tribal council some of his enemies charged him with undermining Santal society, and one of the counts against him was that by abstaining from beer he was doing harm to the spirits.

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• 273 It would be a mistake to suggest that the attitude of the Santal towards intoxicants is one of simple approval. There are two standards at work. There is, on the one hand, the almost universal acceptance of the habit, reinforced by its sanction in mythology, the social function that it does fulfil and the fact that it is a form of food. There is also, on the other hand, a recognition somewhat grudgingly given to the undesirable consequences of the habit. It leads to a loss of working days, to [178] quarrels and offences against the moral code. Most informants agree that the drinking habit has increased in recent years. Such a statement must be regarded with the suspicion appropriate to all attempts to glorify the good old days. It does, however, imply the existence of a critical attitude. The earliest records, which indicate conditions a hundred years ago, all mention the drinking habits of the Santal as phenomenal. It is probable that the drinking of spirits in preference to beer has grown during the time when the Santals have been drawn more completely into a money economy, and it is certain that the Congress boycott in 1930 gave more than a temporary impetus to illicit distilling. Nevertheless, there is further evidence of [522] moral judgments being applied to drinking. The habitual [558] drunkard is a figure of fun and regarded with contempt. The drinking of rice beer does not lead to much intoxication except during festivals. A woman who drinks to excess is considered to be loose in other respects as well. People frequently complain that whereas formerly only the old men and women used to drink, now everyone does so. It would be easy, however, to overdo the picture of a Santal conscience in these matters, for they are a pleasure-loving people and drink is associated with their pleasures. The common attitude was well expressed by an old woman who had been asked to sing when she replied: "I cannot sing without beer."

221 The annual hunt takes place during the hot season. This 224 institution is still vigorous wherever there are Santals living [462] within reach of a forest. Hunting is regarded as the characteristic activity of the male. When the date of a hunt has to be [634] fixed, the responsibility for the arrangements and for making it known through the area rests with the *parganath*. The date may be fixed in different ways; each *pargana* follows its own 221 tradition. In three adjoining localities the following three 224 traditions are observed. In one the hunt is held always on the 184 seventh day of the month of *Baisakh* (April-May). In the second it is held on the day of the full moon in the same month.

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over a wide field, involving inheritance, marriages and instances of indiscipline. Members are allowed to appeal against decisions made in village councils. Punishments inflicted range from outcasting to fines, and crude punishments are sometimes exacted on the spot, as in a case of a youth who had transgressed the rules of behaviour towards a woman relative with whom he was not in a joking relationship. He was compelled to drag his nose along a line of urine provided by the village headman whose authority had been flouted. The hearing of cases continues till the small hours of the morning and the discussions appear interminable, with accusation and counter-accusation, the calling of witnesses and references to tribal law and custom. It is, however, one of the great educating and cementing institutions in the life of the tribe. It is known to them by the name of "high court", a name that has been naturalized in most Indian languages. It is also called the *sendra durup'*, the hunt sitting, and the *lo bir durup'*, the burnt forest sitting, the latter name being due to the fact that the hunt takes place when the undergrowth in the forest has been burnt to help the fertilizing of the soil.

Meanwhile, when the evening meal is over the young men gather in another part of the clearing and spend the night in revelry. There is much strong liquor in evidence. In some cases the place of meeting has become the site of a government liquor shop. The dances, of a class known as *doŋger*, are men's dances, and the songs, known as *bir*, or forest songs, are men's songs. They are frankly coarse and deal largely with the physical aspects of love, courtship and lust. Many of the songs that are sung on this night are never sung by the Santals in any mixed company, or, indeed, at any other time, a fact that indicates among them a standard of delicacy in sexual behaviour which certain modern schools of thought appear at times to deny to primitive people.

Towards morning some of the folk, young and old, rest for an hour or two of much-needed sleep, but when the sun has risen they take some breakfast and begin to disperse. They make their way to their own villages, hunting as they go; but on this second day the proceedings are apt to be unexciting, for they do not find much to kill. By late afternoon the men are home again with their spoils, and when these have been divided they work off their fatigue in sleep.

The supposed monotony of the struggle for a livelihood is broken by so many devices of nature and of man that it is

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sand on the pathways becomes unbearably hot for our feet. Pigs were killed at dawn, cut, and the meat was roasted first thing so that it would be ready when the people returned home. The day turned out to be very warm. Some men went into the village of G—— because of their thirst to get a drink of beer, and they said: 'One pice worth of beer from G—— is as good as six pice of beer from that other place.' " The market is the main shopping centre for the villagers. There are cloth stalls and stalls of imported trinkets and ornaments. Potters, weavers, blacksmiths, purveyors of "medicines" and many others display their wares. The Santals may have grain for sale in a good year; they sell fowls and vegetables and buy their salt and cooking oil regularly, with other commodities at need. The market is a great place for the exchange of gossip, for meeting friends and relatives; it is here that many flirtations begin and matches are set in hand.

Nevertheless, the main business of the Santals' life, round which most of their activities centre, is to wrest from the poor soil the greatest possible amount of food. The struggle leaves little time for philosophizing, but they do sometimes crystallize in a phrase some bitter lesson from experience, as when they say: "Rain in the morning, like a friendship that is easily made, does not last." They work as hard as their social obligations allow. There is nothing distinctive in their methods of agriculture, and for generations they have been accustomed to settled cultivation and the use of the plough. The division of labour between men and women, the taboo against women handling the plough, they share with the surrounding culture. They observe the same propitious days and seasons for sowing and reaping as their neighbours. A great authority on the Santals has said:[1] "They are on their way to becoming agriculturalists, but are, as yet, far behind. . . . They have not as yet learnt the need for and the benefits of weeding and manuring, or of changing the crops, and much more. For example, they do not take proper care of their cattle. These are mostly herded by children, who use much of the time for their own games and pleasures. When the paddy is harvested, the cattle are permitted to roam about. A direct result of this is that it is impossible for people to have any crops standing after the middle of December or thereabouts; the cattle would

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, Pt. III. "How the Santals live", *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1940, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 434.

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decorated with paper streamers. One of the songs sung to the accompaniment of the *duań* is in honour of the instrument itself and recounts the birth and growth of the gourd on the manure heap. Some of the dances enact hunting scenes and fights with bow and arrow.

During weddings and festivals the dancing takes place at night as well as in the daytime. Drink is plentiful, and the dance goes on until the moon is setting and the first light of morning appears in the sky. At these times dancing is associated with romance as well as with illicit flirtations and unions; amid the general rejoicing it is easy for couples to slip away unnoticed. Dancing, however, is not by any means confined to the more formal and set occasions. During the hot season in particular there is an almost nightly gathering in some part of the village, when the younger members of the community dance together. At these times the *lagre*, a simple dance, is much used. Of this there are many variations, and different varieties appear to be popular in different localities. One of the most popular in the area is a variety of *lagre* known as *porob*, which appears to be unknown elsewhere. These dances are suitable for any occasion.[1]

Santal music is largely but not entirely associated with dancing. The Santals are a musical people and find in music an outlet for the emotional and imaginative sides of their nature. From an early age boys begin to play on a whistle, the high and plaintive notes of which can be heard coming from the fields and woods as the boys tend the herds. Later most of them become proficient in playing the flute. The name *tirio* is used to denote different kinds of flute as well as the boys' whistle. Flutes contain six holes, and the usual type is the true flute that is held to one side—the instrument associated with Krishna in Hindu mythology. Some are beautifully made. One man playing at Sarenga during the Lakshmi Puja had a beautiful specimen; at the higher end there was a brass figure of Krishna playing the flute, while at the other end there was mounted a brass dove. Another type is shaped like an inverted T, the air being blown into the base of the T, while the arms,

[1] Bodding's *Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 331, lists thirty-one dances.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 43]

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basket on her head; likewise *Marak Burn* took the bow and arrows and *Manjhi haram* held the axe. Just before sunset the men came to their senses, the priest gathered up all the things, and his wife carried the lucky water-pot. As before, the youths and maidens placed the priest in their midst and again the spirits came and danced with the others. Then in every house, from one end of the village street to the other, they washed the feet of the priest. He put *sarjom* flowers into the hair of the girls who washed his feet, and all the people sprinkled water on to each other. On that day we are free to sprinkle water on anyone else.[1] When we reached the priest's house he poured out two pots of beer and we all drank. Again the dancing began and went on till a late hour.

March 18. Yesterday was the full Flower festival day; today is the 'stale' day of the feast. Yesterday everyone was drunk, and again today they began to drink early. There were many visitors in the village, for we had invited daughters, sisters and sons-in-law to be with us. We had to feed them well, and we were busy with all the preparations. One prepared rice, another flour, while the men killed cocks or goats or pigs, for yesterday they had no time to feast well. Even so, in some of the houses a few people became drunk before they had time to eat. Those unfortunates had no meat either yesterday or today. Most of the time went in feasting, though there was some dancing in the village street, and the dancers sang:

> Let us gather, O elder sister, the *matkom*;
> Let us wear the *sarjom* flowers, elder sister, in our hair;
> Let us drink, O elder sister, the juice of the *matkom*.[2]

Most of the singing was done by a small band of old men and women who went into each of the houses and were given beer and *matkom* flowers by the people of the house. In our part of the village there was a fierce quarrel. Some of the men who went to stop the trouble were themselves beaten and returned very angry to their homes. Before midnight everyone was fast asleep, for all had been drinking heavily. I thought to myself, if anyone came here tonight with evil intent he could steal anything he wanted with the greatest ease; and, in fact, that is what happened. During the night someone stole from the headman's house five goats, male and female."

[1] Water "squirts" are made from bamboo and are used freely.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 18.

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iron bangle on her wrist and iron betel nut crackers in her hand. Then they are led inside the house, where they are set down and fed on a dish of black beans and rice. The bridegroom has to make a show of refusing to eat until the bride's father presents him with a rupee.

The party outside begin to drink beer that is variously named by the different groups. The bride's fellow villagers drink beer "in honour of the guests", while the bridegroom's fellow villagers drink "in honour of the new relations"; the young people are permitted to drink "dew beer" that will help them to avoid the chill they might otherwise contract by dancing and drumming through the whole night. While a feast of goat's meat curry and rice is being prepared the guests sit around and talk and sing. The headmen of the two villages, however, have some work to complete. The presents from the bridegroom's family are handed over by their headman to the bride's headman. These are for the most part clothing. The *boiga itat'* is a cloth of twelve cubits for the sister of the bride's father. *Itat'* is a word that ordinarily means food left over on the plate of one who has eaten; perhaps it is applied to these presents in the sense that they are left over when the bride price has been given and received. The bride's mother receives a cloth of eleven cubits. The grandmothers receive cloths of ten cubits known as the *here itat'*, or husks. The bride's father may receive a cow, and her maternal uncle is given a money fee, it is said, instead of a cow. The amount given is small, usually a few annas. The headmen themselves receive a half-rupee each, the *jogmanjhi* receives a loin-cloth and the *godet'* one anna, while the anointing maidens receive a half-anna each. In this way the special duties and responsibilities of various parties to the wedding are acknowledged. The bride's maternal grandmother is made to "pay" for her cloth. She does so by presenting five small measures of rice, five sticks of turmeric and five rolled cheroots to the bridegroom's headman, all being wrapped in a bundle together. The bride price that is paid at this time is also paid through the headmen. Many of the presents and fees are known by hidden names. The bride price is called the "milk tree", a term that is also used sometimes for a mother; the fee received by the headmen is known as the "tree of the sacred grove"; the cloth for the bride's mother is called "hot water".[1]

When the feasting is over the bridegroom's party gets ready to leave and the members are escorted to the end of the village street. There once more they sit down and a final beer-drinking

[1] See Chapter 4, p. 48, for other examples connected with marriage.

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764 properly until the corpse has been thoroughly consumed. When it is over the onlookers begin to search among the embers for the *jaûbaha*, literally the "bone-flower". I have never met a Santal who has been able to explain the meaning of the term. Three pieces of bone are collected, two from the skull and one piece of the collar bone. The turmeric paste and the sun-dried rice flour are mixed together and used to clean the bones; the small earthen pot in which the turmeric was carried is cleaned in the fire, and when it is dry the inside is again cleaned with some of the paste, after which the bones are put into it. The mouth of the pot is then stopped up with a fragment of earthenware and is sealed with some of the same paste; a small hole, however, is left in the centre of the lid "to enable the dead one to breathe". The remains of the fire are put out with great care. One of the men brings water from nearby, using the water pot brought from the house for this purpose; others sprinkle water and one man scatters the ashes with the winnowing fan. If the [787] fire should rekindle it is thought to be a great misfortune. Men would have to be collected to put it out once more and the bereaved family would be made to pay a fine to the rest of the village. When the fire is out the ashes are brought together in a small space and the rest of the site is cleaned with a plaster of cowdung and water. The parched rice is then sprinkled over the cleaned space, and this is known as "sowing" the rice, the same term being used as for the similar procedure during the marriage ceremony. Finally, the corpse bearers and the one who saw to the fire have to cross the ashes from south to north. The remaining ashes are covered over with the winnowing fan, and each of them in turn then leaps over with his left hand lightly resting on the fan as he does so. The party then leave the cremation ground and the pot containing the bones is buried at the base of a tree.

The members of the funeral party then bathe, after which they return to the end of the village street, where they light a small fire, using the straw from the roof of the house. They burn the cotton seeds together with some resin and oil cake, and holding their hands into the thick smoke they rub it all over themselves. On completing this operation they collect once more at the bereaved home to comfort the family and to drink [614] beer. On this occasion no one who belongs to the same clan as [273] the dead person and his family may partake of the beer.

765 The next phase in the ceremonies is known as *tel nahan*, or "oil washing", and alternatively it is spoken of as *umul ader*, or

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enjoined by custom. Food taboos and those relating to dress and ornament are respected and the rules governing clan exogamy are accepted without question. The reason underlying these facts is probably that even when the myth has been discredited the code of behaviour is charged with emotions that continue to enforce it as long as the village environment has been little affected.

In their attitude to the ancestor cult many of the Christians have evolved a compromise. Some families known to me started their Christian life on the basis of a bargain with the spirits. In one village in particular where there are now eight Christian households in a community of twenty-eight families, at least three of the original families to be converted left one of the brothers outside the Church. The unbaptized members of these families were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the fellowship of the family with their ancestors. As one of those concerned said: "If the offerings had not been continued, then the ancestors might have shown their displeasure at all the children becoming Christian." Others who have become Christians *continue to make offerings*. In no case have I ever been able to discover evidence that Christians make any animal offerings, but during the festival which takes place at the end of the month of *Pus* many Christians make the cakes that are traditionally associated with the festival and make offerings of them to their immediate forbears. The family, represented by the living and the dead, continues to be a focus of powerful sentiments, and the Christians are evidently aware of a void in the teaching that they have received in regard to it.

The identification of *Maran Buru* with Satan incidentally provides a mythological foundation for propaganda in favour of total abstinence, for it was he who taught the first parents to brew beer. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which such propaganda has had the desired effect among the Christian community. Some of its members are known and respected as total abstainers, a fact that illustrates the introduction of a changed standard of values. On the other hand, the majority of village Christians certainly drink beer. The attitude of the community towards the older people who indulge is tolerant, and the habit is explained largely by the fact that the provision of beer is important in showing hospitality towards visitors. Drunkenness, however, is not condoned and it is certainly no longer a form of communal rejoicing. Drinking to excess, where it occurs, has become a private habit surrounded with secrecy.